



# NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 2004

TAMPA BAY CHAPTER of the  
RARE FRUIT COUNCIL INTERNATIONAL, Inc.

EDITORS: BOB HEATH, PAULA HARDWICK, CHARLES NOVAK, LINDA NOVAK, JIM LEE, SALLY LEE

PRESIDENT: CHARLES NOVAK

WEBSITE: [www.rarefruit.org](http://www.rarefruit.org) (Charles Novak)

MEETINGS ARE HELD ON THE 2nd SUNDAY OF THE MONTH @ 2:00 PM.

NEXT MEETING: AUG 8, SUNDAY, WESTSIDE CONFERENCE CENTER, U S F

PROGRAM: THE SPEAKER FOR THIS MONTH'S MEETING IS LARRY BRIDGE, WHO WILL BE TALKING ABOUT FERTILIZERS & OTHER PRODUCTS BENEFICIAL TO THE CULTIVATION OF PLANTS, INCLUDING A RECENT DISCOVERY OF GREAT SIGNIFICANCE. In growing fruiting trees, nothing is much more important than fertilizers; their ingredients, when to use & how much. All of us have questions about fertilizers and Larry should have the answers. We will also have our plant raffle, tasting table and farmers market. See you there.

## WHAT'S HAPPENING

Jul - Aug 2004

by PAUL ZMODA

A friend once asked me why sugar apple seeds he had planted would come up, but the seedlings failed to free themselves from the seedcoats. Most died with the seed still attached at the tip of each one. This situation is commonly seen when planting annonas. The preventive remedy is quite simple: plant them deeply enough. The seedlings need friction against soil to pull themselves free of the seedcoats as they emerge from the soil. An analogy would be like having your shoe pulled off after stepping into deep mud. If you had stepped into a shallow mud puddle, your shoe would stay on. I usually plant annonas at least one inch deep in Vermiculite.

Our Julie mangoes are just delicious. The Carrie mango, top-grafted onto the Julie tree, set a nice crop in the second blooming period along with more Julies. They are getting big, fast.

Some pawpaws are forming flower buds for next spring. These buds are rounder and fatter than leaf buds and are forming in the leaf axils of this year's growth.

Bunch grapes are changing color, signalling that the ripening process is under way. We are busy planning a test trial of wine from our bunch grape, 'Il Primo'. As they approach their optimum harvest point, the grape juice must be monitored closely. Measurements are made weekly of the Brix (sugar content), the acidity and the Ph. When all these parameters agree, we will pick the grapes and commence the wine making.

A package of budwood from six olive cultivars was Fed-Exed to me from California. A piece of each variety was cleft-grafted onto our most vigorous olive tree. All the remaining pieces were set out into cutting boxes.

It was with great sorrow to learn of the passing of our good friend and grape-growing expert, Mr. D.D. Smith, in March. I learned quite a bit from him. He will be missed.

### Visit to Merritt Island

On Sunday July 11, 45 members of our Tampa Bay RFCI traveled to Merritt Island to visit members of the Brevard RFCI. Merritt Island is a barrier island located near the Kennedy Space Center. We met at the home of Toppy and Claire Feil between 9:30AM and 10:00AM. We then drove the short distance to Jerry and Darleen Hunt's home for a tour of their 5-acre property. Our large group was divided into 2 smaller groups; one guided by Jerry and the other by Darleen. They have lived on the property for 28 years and have planted many fruiting plants, which include: mango, longan, lychee, citrus, papaya, bananas, carambola, avocado, passion fruit, black sapote, grapes, tamarind, persimmon, loquat, guava, miracle fruit, vanilla bean, and cherry of the Rio Grande. There is a 100 year-old citrus grove that was grafted onto sour orange rootstock and is now infected with the tristeza virus. As the trees die, Jerry replaces them with mango and avocado seedlings. It is exciting to see and taste the first fruits from the seedlings as they may be even better than the fruit from which the seed came. Darleen uses green mango to make her tasty green mango pickles. After the tour we were treated to Lemon grass tea, limeade, slices of Tommy Atkins mango and fresh figs. Jerry says, "If you have room to plant only one mango tree, Tommy Atkins is the one to plant". It is a heavy bearer and the fruit is delicious.

Our next stop was the home of Kevin Zari. Kevin is a young plant enthusiast who truly enjoys growing rare and tropical fruits. Kevin has 2 one-half acre lots in a very nice housing development. Kevin has lived there 5 years and has planted an impressive variety of fruiting trees, including: coconut, monstera, ice cream bean, lychee, mango, mamey sapote, cacao, red atemoya, sapodilla, white sapote, macadamia nut, loquat, pomegranate, guava, soursop, carambola, cashew and others. Some members sampled jaboticaba, tamarind, strawberry tree fruit and red mombin (hog plum) for the first time. Everyone was very impressed with the tour of Kevin's beautifully maintained fruit trees.

Next we returned to Toppy's place. We were provided with a delicious lunch and had the opportunity to sample and enjoy several varieties of mango, including: Saigon, Bailey's Marvel, Carrie, Val Carrie, Glenn, Hayden and Southern Blush. Each variety had a wonderful flavor and texture; it would be difficult to choose a favorite. After lunch we toured Toppy's property (he has 18 acres). He has 31 varieties of mango (over 100 trees) and many Lychee trees (Brewster, Mauritius, Hakip, Emperor). People come from miles away to purchase his mangos and lychees. To our members delight we were invited to pick and eat lychees remaining on the trees (except the Emperor which wasn't ripe yet). We saw other fruiting trees, including: annonas, sugar apple, black sapote, avocado, loquat, jaboticaba and a jackfruit tree with several fruit on it. This tree has previously produced a 60 pound jackfruit.

We left Merritt Island about 3:15PM. The weather had become very stormy and we regret we didn't get to tour the Crackerbox Organic Farm. We look forward to future visits between our Tampa Bay RFCI and the Brevard RFCI. They are a great group of fruit enthusiasts and we thoroughly enjoyed our visit and their hospitality.

**Membership Directories:** New membership directories will be available at the August meeting. If you cannot attend the meeting and would like a copy to be mailed to you, please contact Charles Novak (813)754-1399 or [c.novak@worldnet.att.net](mailto:c.novak@worldnet.att.net)

**New Members:** Juan & Julie Cruz  
Michael & Jennelle Gustin

Dunedin  
Lakeland

Arthur Maratas

Wesley Chapel

**From the President**  
Charles Novak

We had a great time on our trip to Merritt Island on Sunday, July 11. The tours were very interesting and the mangos and lychees were delicious. The members who rode with me said they enjoyed the trip and we should schedule field trips more often. If you have a suggestion for a club trip, please let me know.

We need suggestions for speakers. If you know of someone who could give a presentation of interest to our members, please contact Sally or Jim Lee at (813) 982-9359.

We still have a few fruit trees remaining from the April USF sale. If interested, contact me for a list.

Several people have expressed interest in the April 2005 Amazon trip. If you are planning on going (or thinking of going), please contact me. If you would like a copy of the trip itinerary, I will have copies available at the August meeting.

A new USDA law as of June 30, 2004, allows certain seeds (max of 50 seeds) to be imported without any requirements. I have a copy of the new law. If you would like a copy of the part covering the importing of seeds, contact me.

If you would like to become part of an e-mail Rarefruit group, you can join at the following web site: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/rarefruit/> There are over 400 members and a lot of good information on tropical/subtropical fruits is available.

Our August meeting is a must for anyone who is growing plants in Florida. Our speaker will cover what we need to know about fertilizer for our Florida soil. Also, he will talk about the Colloidal all-purpose cleaner, a nontoxic alternative to using various pesticides, which is being used by nurseries and homeowners to spray fruit trees to control scales, aphids, whiteflies, etc.

I am trying to locate Kensington Pride mangos (from Australia). If you know where I can obtain a tree or seeds, please let me know. Kensington Pride mangos are true to the seeds.

There will be a Board meeting after the regular meeting. Members are welcome to attend.

**Scheduled Speakers/Events:**

**August 8:** Larry Bridge on Fertilizers for our Florida Soil and Colloidal all purpose cleaner (a non-chemical alternative to pesticides and fungicides).

**September 12:** Henry Marshall (Tropical Fruit Club of Orlando) on White Sapote

**October 9 & 10:** USF Botanical Garden Fall Plant Festival

**NOTE FROM GENE JOYNER**

Many areas are receiving welcome summer rains, but the rains have been spotty and not everyone has been enjoying adequate moisture levels. With daytime temperatures often in the low 90's, plants dry out quickly so make sure to provide irrigation at least once a week so trees don't suffer stress.

If you didn't fertilize in June, don't put it off any longer. Most fruit trees have already begun active growth for the summer.

This is a good time for installation of new plants, too. Local nurseries that sell tropical fruits and ornamentals have good inventories of plants to purchase and install at this time of year.

If you haven't done pruning, you should do so. Remove any unwanted branches and reduce overall size as needed for harvesting. Consider a tree's vulnerability to high winds. Reducing size and thinning branches can help them withstand high winds.

Early summer is conducive for propagation - rooting cuttings, doing budding, or grafting and air layering.

## COMMENTS FROM BOB HEATH

USF Plant Sale

I was unable to attend the Club's trip to Merritt Island on Sunday July 11 because of some personal commitments, so I went to the USF Plant Sale Sunday morning. It was quite warm and humid. I talked to several of the vendors, who indicated that it was slow on Saturday and looked like it was going to be slow on Sunday. Hopkins Tropical Plant Nursery that took our place at this sale, brought even more trees from the east coast than we normally have for sale. Sales were anything but brisk and I'm sure he took back a big portion of what he brought over. Now, at this point, we are looking forward to the October Sale at USF.

Fertilizing

Most tropical fruiting trees should be fertilized 3 times a year, in February or March, June or July and September or October. Consider your Fall fertilizing in September or October before winter approaches so as not to encourage young growth easily damaged by low temperatures. Banana and papaya trees may be fertilized monthly year round. Citrus fertilizer 6-4-6 or 6-6-6 with minor elements is a good choice for most tropical fruit trees. Bananas need a high potassium fertilizer like 6-4-12 which may be difficult to locate. An application of wood ashes can provide the potassium. Young trees and those in pots may benefit from a more frequent fertilizing. Our speaker this month will give us additional pointers on fertilizing.

Strange Mango Seed

At my house we've been eating a lot of mangoes lately and planting the seeds. To plant the seeds, I carefully open the seed coat by trimming down one side just through the coat. The seed may then be removed from its coat and planted. One of the seeds I was planting seemed to have fine lines on the surface as though it were made up of several segments, 6 to be exact. After several days, 6 sprouts came up from the seed, one from each segment. When I removed the contents of the pot and washed the soil off in the water, I found that the seed was indeed 6 separate seeds, each producing a root and a stem with leaves. I have planted many mango seeds in my life and never before has this happened. Now I find that this is not an uncommon occurrence. It is called a polyembryonic seed which produces multiple, identical copies of the original tree. Most seeds are monoembryonic and produce only one tree.

**Colloidal All-Purpose Cleaner:** The club has purchased some of the Colloidal cleaner and it will be available for purchase by members at the August meeting. It is a promising alternative to pesticides and fungicides and is being used by plant enthusiasts and nursery operators. It appears that it can aid in the control of scales, whiteflies, aphids, mealy bugs, thrips, sooty mold and certain types of fungi. It is biodegradable, environmentally friendly and non-toxic to people and animals.

**Library Books:** Please return any club library books. If you are interested in the position of club librarian, please speak up.

**Photo Contest:** The club's photo contest will end on September 30. Please submit your photos as soon as possible. Refer to the July newsletter for information and rules. The information will also be available at the August meeting.



## SAPODILLA

by Gene Joyner

The sapodilla (*Manilkara zapota*) is a large evergreen tropical tree native to Central America and Mexico. Although it is slow growing it is a recommended large shade tree because of its high resistance to breakage and uprooting by strong winds. The tree also has a high tolerance to salt and is often used in seaside plantings.

The sapodilla will adapt to a wide range of soil types and growing conditions but will be injured by low temperatures of 26° or lower. The tree is quite drought resistant once it has been well established and will also survive short periods of flooding with no ill effects.

Young trees should be fertilized about every other month with a citrus or fruit tree type fertilizer and after the first year, trees only need to be fertilized two or three times a year.

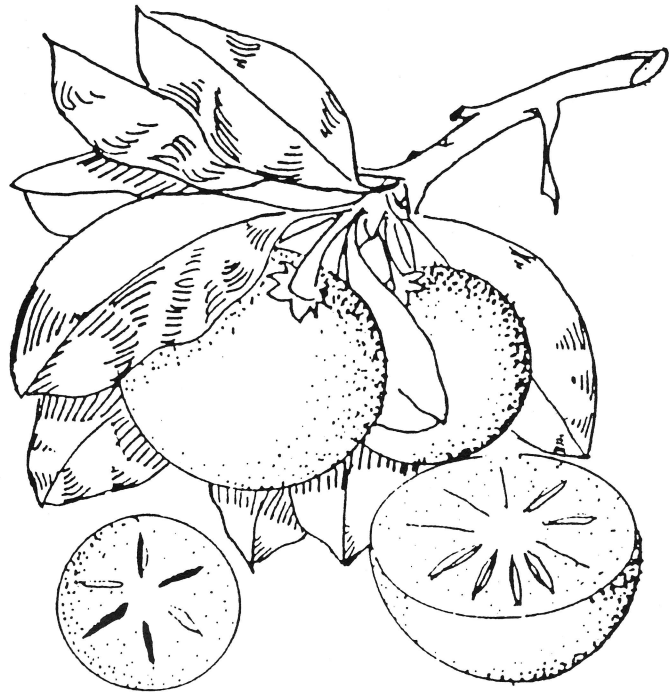
Small inconspicuous 3/8" flowers are borne throughout the year and the large two to four inch round or egg shaped, brown fruit mature primarily during the warmest months, through some fruit may mature during the winter.

The flesh is usually light yellowish-brown with a texture varying from smooth to granular and sweet pleasant taste. There might be no seeds or there could be as many as 6 to 10 hard, shiny, flat black 3/4" seeds. When fruits reach their maximum size they are usually picked and allowed to ripen off the tree. If you allow them to ripen on the tree, they will often be destroyed when falling to the ground.

The fruit can be used in a variety of ways as a fresh fruit but the latex in fruit is a problem when cooked.

Landscape nurseries offer sapodillas for sale but many of these have been propagated from seed and may be inferior in fruit quality and productivity. A number of seedling trees in south Florida produce good quality fruit and these can be propagated by grafting or air layering. Named varieties include "Prolific", "Brown Sugar", "Modello", "Russell" and "Martin". When selecting for fruit characteristics, trees of good quality can be grafted or air layered.

Sapodillas have very few pest problems. However, the mature fruit is attacked by the Caribbean fruit fly. It is important that the fruit be picked and not allowed to get too mature on the tree or else there will be severe damage to the tree.



Sapodilla

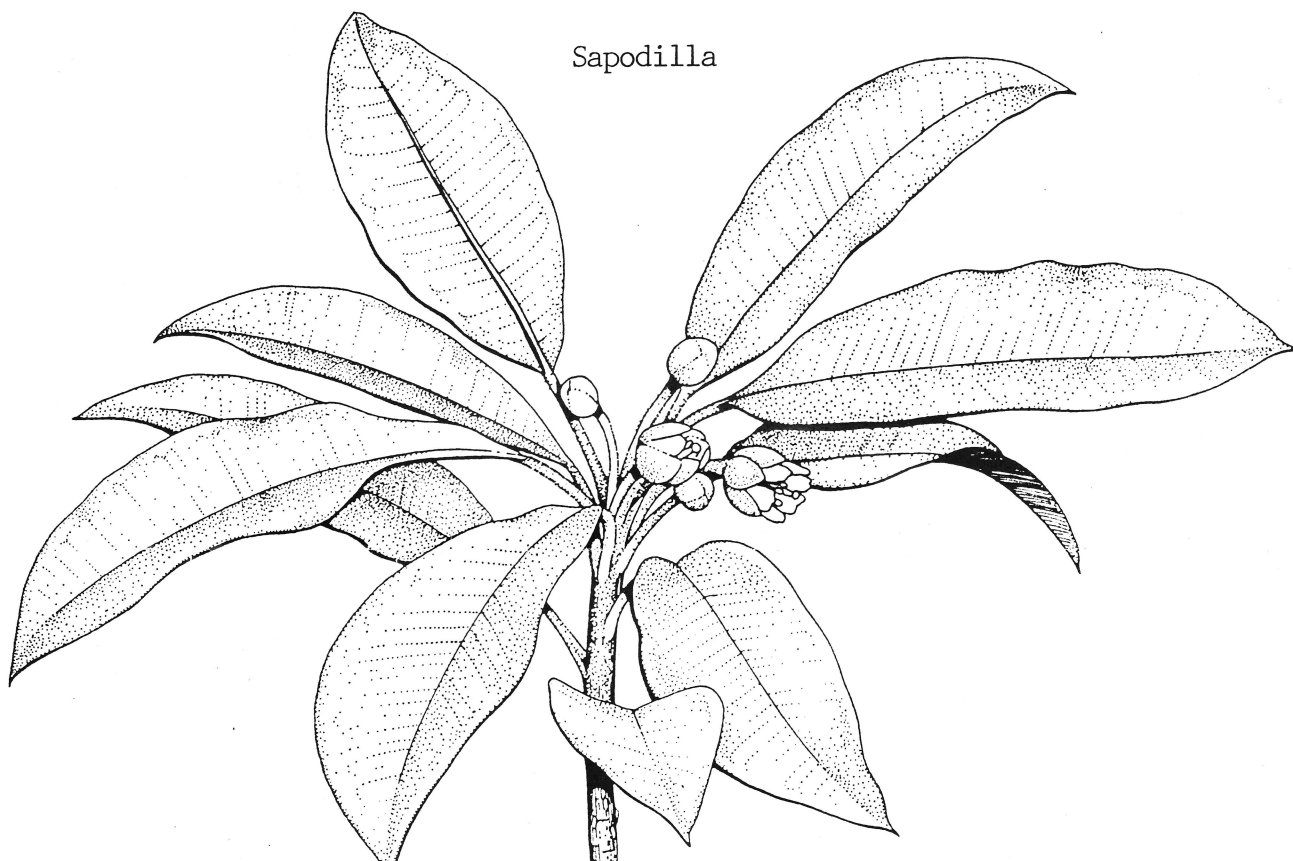
## MEMBERS CORNER

Wanted: Budwood of these citrus: Tarocco Blood Orange, Gold Nugget Mandarin, Cocktail Grapefruit, Yuzu.

Contact Paul Zmoda 813-932-2469 or Email [FlatwoodsFarm@AOL.com](mailto:FlatwoodsFarm@AOL.com)



Bonsai Pots - We have ten bonsai trays to give to an RFCI member who is into bonsai growing. Call Bob Heath @ 813-289-1068 if you are interested.



Sapodilla

FLORIDA NEW ORLEANS  
HARDY PLANTS  
LEAFY PLANTS

FIRST CLASS MAIL

RFCI Tampa Bay Chapter  
4109 DeLeon St  
Tampa FL 33609

